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Letter dated 14 August 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to my letter dated 15 May 2003 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/574), as well as to Security Council resolutions 1484 (2003) and 1493 (2003) of 30 May and 28 July, respectively.

Pursuant to the relevant paragraphs of those resolutions, preparations for the deployment by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) of a brigade-size force to Bunia are well under way. The deployment to Bunia of an infantry battalion from Bangladesh will be completed by 15 August. It will join the Uruguayan battalion which is already there, to ensure a smooth transition from the Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) on 1 September 2003.

The preparedness of MONUC to take over from IEMF on 1 September notwithstanding, it is expected that the situation in Bunia could become volatile during the transition period. To meet the challenges of the transition, contingency planning is being conducted by MONUC, in close cooperation with IEMF. I have been informed by the European Union, and by France in its capacity as lead nation, that, while IEMF would begin to disengage following the transfer of authority on 1 September, it would be ready to provide emergency support to MONUC, at the latter's request, to assist it in the performance of its mandated responsibilities in and around Bunia, if circumstances require.

I believe that such support would contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in the area during the transition period. Accordingly, I should like to recommend that the Council consider authorizing the Interim Emergency Multinational Force to provide assistance to the MONUC troops deployed in and around Bunia. That assistance would be provided under the conditions described above, and for as long as IEMF considers that it has the means and operational capabilities to do so.

I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. Annan

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